

Message Text

PAGE 01 JIDDA 03932 111121Z

45

ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /026 W

----- 059447

R 111003Z SEP 73

FM AMEMBASSY JIDDA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4905

INFO AMCONSUL DHAHRAN

S E C R E T JIDDA 3932

EXDIS

DHAHRAN FOR ACTING CHUSMTM

DEPT PASS DOD FOR ISA

DEPT PASS AIR FORCE LOGISTICS COMMAND FOR GEN CATTON

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS:

SUBJECT: PRINCE SULTAN ON SAUDI PURCHASE OF F-4'S
AND/OR F-5'S

SUMMARY: DEFENSE MINISTER PRINCE SULTAN TOLD AFLC
COMMANDER GENERAL CATTON HE IS INTERESTED IN ACQUIRING
TWO MORE SQUADRONS F-5E'S AND PERHAPS FOUR TO EIGHT
F-4'S AS PRESTIGE AND TRAINING AIRCRAFT. PRINCE ASKED
OUR VIEWS. CATTON EXPLAINED F-4 FOR ITS DEGREE
OF SOPHISTICATION IS STILL FINEST IN WORLD, BUT KEY
QUESTION ON WHICH HRH SHOULD FOCUS IS CAPACITY RSAF
ABSORB BOTH TYPES OF AIRCRAFT IN ANYWHERE NEAR SAME TIME
FRAME. F-4 BRIEFING TEAM NOW HERE SHOULD BE ABLE MAKE
CLEAR TO SULTAN MANPOWER DEMANDS WHICH F-4 ACQUISITION
WOULD ENTAIL. SULTAN'S NEW LINE OF THINKING SEEMS
RELLECT DOUBTS NOW ARISING IN MIDDLE LEVEL RSAF OFFICERS
WITH REGARD THEIR ABILITY UTILIZE F-4'S SATISFACTORILY
AND PROBLEMS OF INDEFINITE DEPENDENCE ON CONTRACTOR AND
OTHER FOREIGN PERSONNEL. END SUMMARY.

SECRET

PAGE 02 JIDDA 03932 111121Z

1. DURING AFLC COMMANDER GENERAL CATTON'S SEPT 10 CALL
ON DEFENSE MINISTER PRINCE SULTAN, LATTER DID SOME OUT-
LOUD THINKING ON POSSIBILITIES FOR SAUDI ACQUISITION
NEXT INCREMENT INTERCEPTOR AIRCRAFT.

2. SULTAN INDICATED HE IS INTERESTED IN ACQUIRING "TWO MORE SQUADRONS F-5E'S(20-24) SINCE THESE IN MANY RESPECTS FULFILL SAUDI REQUIREMENTS VERY WELL AND WOULD ALLOW STRENGTHENING OF RSAF BY AUGMENTATION IN NUMBERS OF A TYPE OF AIRCRAFT WITH WHICH RSAF WILL SOON BE FAMILIAR. F-4'S COULD PLAY USEFUL ROLE ALSO AS PRESTIGE AND TRAINING AIRCRAFT AND SAUDI ARABIA SHOULD PLAN TO BUY FOUR TO EIGHT F-4'S AS WELL AS ADDITIONAL F-5E'S. SULTAN, WHILE RECOGNIZING F-4'S EXCELLENT PERFORMANCE AND ITS SUCCESSFUL UTILIZATION BY TWO OF SAUDI ARABIA'S NEIGHBORS, NOTED THAT IT REPRESENTED STILL AN OLDER GENERATION OF DESIGN ACHIEVEMENT. SAUDI ARABIA NEEDED TO BE THINKING ABOUT HOW IT COULD PREPARE ITSELF FOR THE NEXT HIGHER LEVEL, THE F-14. TURNING TO AMBASSADOR, SULTAN COMMENTED THAT SINCE BOTH POLITICAL AND MILITARY REPRESENTATIVES OF USG WERE PRESENT, PRINCE WOULD BE INTERESTED IN OUR VIEWS PRACTICALITY COURSE HE HAD SUGGESTED.

3. AMB REPLIED PROBLEM DID NOT SEEM SO MUCH ONE OF POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE SINCE USG HAD, AS HRH KNEW, PROMISED IN PRINCIPLE MAKE F-4 AVAILABLE IF SAG WISHED IT. MORE IMPORTANT WAS QUESTION OF FEASIBILITY AND EFFECTIVENESS IN MILITARY TERMS OF ACQUIRING BOTH F-4 AND F-5E.

4. GENERAL CATTON EXPLAINED THAT F-4, FOR ITS DEGREE OF SOPHISTICATION, WAS FINEST PLANE IN WORLD, DESPITE SOME DOZEN OR SO YEARS IT HAS BEEN IN USE. TRANSITION FROM F-5 TO F-4 WOULD PROVIDE A HELPFUL STEPPING STONE TO EVENTUAL SAUDI ACQUISITION OF FURTHER FOLLOW-ON AIRCRAFT IF INDEED THAT WAS WHAT SAUDI ARABIA ULTIMATELY DESIRED. THE F-5E WAS ALSO AN EXCELLENT PLANE WITH QUESTION ON WHICH HH SHOULD FOCUS WAS SAUDI ARABIA'S OWN ABSORPTIVE CAPACITY: WAS IT ADEQUATE TO MAKE GOOD USE BOTH TYPES OF AIRCRAFT? HOW MUCH AND FOR HOW LONG DID
SECRET

PAGE 03 JIDDA 03932 111121Z

SAUDI GOVT WISH TO DEPEND ON CONTRACTOR PERSONNEL FOR MAINTENANCE AND OPERATIONAL ASSISTANCE? THESE WERE ALL ELEMENTS WHICH PRINCE WOULD NO DOUBT WISH ADDRESS CAREFULLY BEFORE REACHING ANY DECISION. IF HRH SHOULD DECIDE ON ACQUISITION OF F-4 IT SHOULD BE FOR QUANTITY OF 20 TO 24 TO MAKE SUCH AN UNDERTAKING WORTHWHILE.

5. COMMENT: GIVEN LINE OF THINKING REFLECTED IN SULTAN'S REMARKS ABOVE, IT IS FORTUNATE F-4 BRIEFING TEAM SCHEDULED MEET WITH HIM SEPT 11 FOR FULL DISCUSSION F-4 OPERATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS. WE UNDERSTAND TEAM PREPARED PROVIDE COMPLETE UNDERSTANDING OF MANPOWER DEMANDS WHICH F-4 ACQUISITION WOULD ENTAIL. WE WILL

TRY MAKE CERTAIN PRINCE RECOGNIZES EXTRAORDINARILY HEAVY REQUIREMENTS PRESENTED BY ACQUISITION OF F-5E'S AND F-4'S IN ANYWHERE NEAR SAME TIME FRAME. WE THINK THERE IS POSSIBILITY HE MAY MAKE REQUEST FOR MORE FORMAL USG OPINION ON RELATIVE PERFORMANCE CHARACTERISTICS OF F-4 VS F-5E.

6. WE HAVE INDICATION THAT THIS NEW LINE IN SULTAN'S THINKING COMES FROM MIDDLE LEVELS RSAF OFFICER CORPS WHO CONCERNED AT PROSPECT OF CONTINUED HEAVY RSAF DEPENDENCE ON FOREIGN AND CONTRACTOR PERSONNEL, TREND WHICH WOULD BE CONSIDERABLY ACCENTUATED, AS WE UNDERSTAND IT, BY ACQUISITION OF SOPHISTICATED F-4'S. QUITE SENSIBLY THESE OFFICERS SEEM ANXIOUS BE CERTAIN THAT THEY HAVE CAPABILITY OPERATE NEWLY ACQUIRED AIRCRAFT IN CREDITABLE FASHION WITH SOME HOPE ACHIEVING IN NOT TOO DISTANT FUTURE RESPECTABLE DEGREE OF SELF SUFFICIENCY IN MAINTENANCE AS WELL AS OPERATIONS.
THACHER

SECRET

<< END OF DOCUMENT >>

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 10 MAY 1999
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ARMS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 11 SEP 1973
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: golinofr
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973JIDDA03932
Document Source: ADS
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: 11652 GDS
Errors: n/a
Film Number: P750011-1567
From: JIDDA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19730963/abqcefgz.tel
Line Count: 130
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, TEXT ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: golinofr
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 07 JAN 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <07-Jan-2002 by kelleyw0>; APPROVED <23-Jan-2002 by golinofr>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PRINCE SULTAN ON SAUDI PURCHASE OF F-4'S AND/OR F-5'S
TAGS: PARM
To: STATE INFO DHAHRAN
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005